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ABSTRACT

A quasi meta-analysis approach was used to examine the research methodologies used to study issues related to youth (ages 13-25) and careers. Psychlit, ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts, and four journals were searched to identify articles for the study. A total of 67 articles from 18 different sources were analyzed. Eighty-seven percent were from journals, and the remaining 13 percent were found in dissertations, theses, unpublished papers, and a textbook. All articles were classified by year of publication, gender of author(s), author affiliation/title, location of study, and methodology. Sources were classified as using one of the following methodologies: historical, philosophical, ethnographic, case study, survey, comparative experimental, or quasi-experimental. No articles that could be classified as reflecting an ethnographic approach could be found, and none of the sources classified as historical provided more than a 20-year review. Most of the historical studies centered around Super's "work within a life" concept. Researchers in the field of youth and careers were found to be very strong in their use of philosophical, case study, survey, comparative experimental, and quasi-experimental methods. Canadians appear to be rather underrepresented in the quantity of studies conducted; and the eastern United States appears to dominate the field. More qualitative research in general and more longitudinal studies in particular were called for. (MN)

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ED 360 496

A Quasi Meta-Analysis of Youth and Career Research Methodologies

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July 27, 1993

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Abstract

A quasi meta-analysis was conducted on youth and career research methodologies. Results are reported and topics include article selection, number of articles selected, sources utilized, year of publication, gender of authors, author affiliations and titles, location of studies as well as methodological classifications and discussions. The analysis highlights and reports on many trends in youth and career research. Conclusions suggest that researchers appear very strong in their use of philosophical, case study, survey, comparative experimental, and quasi experimental methods. However, there appears to be insufficient research using historical and ethnographic methods.

A Quasi Meta-Analysis of Youth and Career Research Methodologies

A review of the literature pertaining to youth and career identified several themes that have received much attention: career maturity, differences in career aspirations, differences in career development, work values, relationships among curricula, work salience, sequencing career guidance experiences, exploring educational and career opportunities, career guidance strategies to foster decision-making, career guidance and vocational education, integrating work experience with schooling, ways to facilitate job placement, group guidance processes, and community involvement (Herr & Cramer, 1988). However, the research methodologies used to explore these themes have not received much attention.

This quasi meta-analysis provides an overview of the research methodologies utilized to study issues in the youth and career field. This review does not purport to be exhaustive; instead, studies were included in this analysis with the intention of capturing a representative sampling of the different methodological perspectives that have been used to study the connection between youth and career.

For the purposes of this analysis, the term "youth" refers to individuals between the ages of 13 and 25. Thus, secondary and post-secondary students are referred to throughout this paper. The term "career" refers to

> . . . the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine to express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self-development; the series of renumerated and nonrenumerated positions occupied by a person from adolescence through retirement, of which occupation is only one; includes work-related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner together with complementary avocational, familial, and civic roles" (Super, 1976; cited in Herr & Cramer, 1988, p. 17).

The ". . . concept of career embraces prevocational activity such as the effects on students of educational programs and options, as well as the post-vocational activity manifested by the retiree or the pensioner working part-time" (Herr & Cramer, 1988, p. 10).

With these definitions in mind, the writer will now turn to the following topics: article selection, number of articles selected, sources utilized, year of publication, gender of authors, author affiliations and titles, location of studies as well as a methodological classification and discussion of the included articles.

Article Selection

The topic "youth and career" was intentionally kept broad in order to ensure an adequate sampling of articles from different methodological perspectives. Thus, in determining which articles would be included in this analysis, the writer selected articles on the basis of methodological diversity. The research consisted of six stages, each of which is presented with search patterns and results.

Psychlit (journal articles 1/87 to 9/92)

Descriptors Used	No. of Articles Found
Career	2,596
Career planning	119
Career planning and youth	2
Career and youth	54

Twenty-seven of the 54 articles under "career and youth" were initially highlighted and then later reduced down to 7. The remaining 7 articles were included in this analysis.

Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) (educational journals and documents 1/82 to 9/92)

Descriptors Used	No. of Articles Found
Career	15,409
Career planning	1,602
Career planning and youth	102

Forty-five of the 102 articles under "career planning and youth" were highlighted and then reduced down to 8. Therefore, 8 articles from ERIC were included in this quasi meta-analysis.

Dissertation Abstracts (1/89 to 12/91)

Descriptors Used	No. of Articles Found
Career planning and youth	1
Career and youth	91

Twenty of the 91 dissertations under "career and youth" were marked; 7 were eventually kept for this analysis.

Manual Search

A manual search of four journals, over the last two years, was also conducted.

Journal	No. of Articles Selected
Career Development Quarterly	20
Canadian Journal of Counselling	7
Journal of Vocational Behavior	6
Journal of Career Development	3

During the reading process, eight more articles were selected. These eight articles were gleaned from references alluded to in the initial studies the writer read. One textbook was also utilized.

Sources Utilized

A total of 67 articles were selected from 18 different sources for this meta-analysis. Table 1 shows the number of studies found in each of the 18 different sources.

Insert Table 1 about here

Eighty-seven percent of the sources used for this meta-analysis were found in journals. The remaining 13% were found in dissertations, theses, unpublished papers, and one textbook.

Year of Publication

All articles used in this analysis were written between 1980 and 1992. Eighty-six percent of the studies chosen were conducted between 1988 and 1992. The year 1992 represented the largest year, accounting for 38.8% of the studies, followed by 1989, accounting for 16.4% of the sources.

Gender of Authors

Both male and female authors appear to be writing in the career and youth field. Males are slightly more represented, at 35.8%, while females accounted for 31.3% of the sources used in this analysis. The remaining 32.9% of the studies were reflected in joint authorship by both males and females.

Author Affiliation/Title

Professors were responsible for 61.2% of the studies, of which 37.4% were professors of psychology, educational psychology, and counselling, and 23.8% were professors of education, management, behavioral sciences, special education, human development, leisure studies, and law. It was impressive to see the diversity of people studying in the career and youth field. Significantly, the remaining 38.8% of the studies were conducted by people not classified as professors. Even with 11.4% of this 38.8% being accounted for by Masters or Doctoral students, 27.4% of the studies were still done by people outside of

academia. These people included vocational guidance officers, career counsellors, school principals, industrial education coordinators, marriage and family therapists, directors of provincial education, employment specialists, and vocational research psychologists.

Location of Studies

Seventy-two percent of the sources were gleaned from the United States. The remaining 28% of the studies were conducted outside of the U.S. The top three states were Ohio (11.9%), Pennsylvania (7.5%), and New York (6.0%), reflecting a fairly large number of studies conducted in the eastern United States. This may be due to the fact that this region of the United States is highly industrialized. Employment and unemployment rates fluctuate considerably within this region. Thus, these states may have placed a larger emphasis on career development. On the other hand, this trend may be accounted for simply on the basis of the higher population density in this area. Countries outside the United States and Canada accounted for 13.4% while Canada accounted for 14.9% of the studies.

Methodological Classification of Articles

All of the sources, except the one textbook, have been classified in terms of the methodology used. Table 2 shows how many studies were deemed historical, philosophical, ethnographic, case study, survey, comparative experimental, or quasi experimental.

Insert Table 2 about here

As can be seen in Table 2, the goal of finding studies from different methodologies was achieved. However, the writer was unable to locate any articles that could be classified as ethnographic. Each methodology will now be discussed separately. An explanation of how articles were classified into each methodology will be outlined, along with a presentation and critique of some of the research found under each category.

Historical

Articles were classified as historical if they provided an overview of past or recent developments in the field. All of these sources provided reviews ranging from one year to 20 years.

None of the sources classified as historical provided more than a 20-year review. Thus, most of these reviews centered around Super's 'work within a life' concept (Cook, 1991). In general, career counselling approaches and interventions are often reviewed with reference to this theme.

Swanson (1992c), in her review of the literature from 1989 to 1991, states that life span research ". . . continues to be focused primarily in early career stages, particularly on exploration and initial career choice, with lesser attention to career behavior in middle and later adulthood" (p. 101). She also reports that investigations of the construct of career maturity are not showing the expected

relationships with other variables. This is currently adding further doubt to the construct (Swanson, 1992c).

Although these reviews are helpful, the field appears to be lacking in the historical reporting of qualitative research. This type of research would ideally present and critique methods of career counselling youth in the early 1900s as compared to today. It would be interesting for such qualitative comparisons to search for possible economic, sociological, political, and historical accounts for the potential differences. This may lead to more of an interpretation of early times and the influences prevailing during these times. These distinctions may help career counsellors of today to better understand the development of their field and may point out some cyclical types of phenomena that may enhance service delivery in the future. More importantly, it may help to focus researchers on the significance of extraneous variables such as economic, sociological, political, and historical forces that undoubtedly have a great impact on career counselling. In other words, this type of focus may shift the attention of career counsellors more toward the system itself and not just the individual client. Researchers of this sort may have a role to play in societal policy formation. Obviously, to what extent and in what direction would depend upon the results of this research.

Philosophical

Articles were classified as philosophical if they attempted to reconceptualize or redefine the field in any way. In this manner, many of these authors sought to argue for new ways of looking at career counselling. For

example, Manuele-Adkins, in her article entitled, "Career Counseling is Personal Counseling" (1992), argues for career counsellors to place a larger emphasis on the affective and psychological issues confronting clients with career problems. She claims that career counselling is presently far too encapsulated with the rational, informational aspects of career decision-making and that more emphasis needs to be placed on ". . . developmental stages and tasks, identify formation and status, self-concept, psychological needs and internal barriers" (Manuele-Adkins, 1992, p. 313).

Vondracek and Schulenberg (1992) argue against the notion of career development occurring in stages and periods. Instead, they view career counselling ". . . within the broader perspective of human development intervention" (Vondracek & Schulenberg, 1992, p. 292). Their point is that, ". . . if career development is more diverse and variable, it may also be more modifiable and, essentially, subject to redesign through appropriate intervention" (Vondracek & Schulengerb, 1992, p. 300).

Betz (1992) suggests that self-efficacy theory may have a place within career counselling. In this manner, the counsellor's first task would be to determine areas where low perceptions of self-efficacy are serving as a barrier to the client's career options, decisions, or implementation. Once identified, the next step would be to design interventions to increase self-efficacy (Betz, 1992).

The writer found, as evidenced above, that many authors within this field have argued for the expansion of career counselling. However, at least one writer

was found to be skeptical of this expansion. Conger (1992) states that there ". . . seems to be much enthusiasm among counsellors for broadening the definition of career development to include any aspect of life" (p. 376). Conger (1992) believes that there is already too much unfinished business in career counselling and that being lured into more general areas may result in further avoidance of these issues. For example, he states that more research needs to be conducted in this field regarding reasons why people do not follow through on their career goals after going through an apparently satisfying career planning process. Conger (1992) also suggests the need for a new paradigm for career counselling and the need for counsellors to examine the system itself and not just the individual client.

Other studies in the philosophical arena attempt to describe students at risk of dropping out of school and vocational programs (Bloch, 1991), explain the intentions of parents in influencing their children's career development (Young & Friesen, 1992), and argue that the educational system does not emphasize guidance and counselling enough (Drier & Ciccone, 1988).

The literature classified as philosophical possesses a great deal of topical diversity. It was impressive to see people arguing on both sides of important issues such as the direction of the field. Overall, there appears to be no shortage of excellent philosophical reporting in the youth and career field.

Ethnographic

The writer was unable to find any studies that could be classified as ethnographic. An ethnographic account would have provided a qualitative picture

of the way of life of some identifiable group of people. The lack of literature from this methodological perspective seems to point toward an overall lack of qualitative research in this field. A way of remediating this deficiency would be to have career researchers link up with sociological and anthropological researchers to conduct field work to further explain the way of life of more disadvantaged groups. Ethnographic accounts of this sort may lead to more effective and novel approaches of helping these groups of people to obtain satisfying employment. Similarly, Canada's increase in immigration is causing problems for career counsellors who attempt to treat all cases the same. This lack of knowledge about cultural and ethnic differences would be greatly reduced if career counselling researchers started to conduct more ethnographic studies of the differing populations they are increasingly being asked to serve.

Case Studies

Studies were classified as case studies if the focus of attention was the case and not the whole population of cases. If the researchers were trying to understand and define their own bounded system and not generalize their results to other populations, then the study was considered a case study.

The case studies that were found varied from one individual to a group of individuals enrolled in a school or career development program. For example, Brook (1992) zoomed in on one individual in order to explain the use of the repertory grid technique. This technique provides an analysis of where the individual is in relation to his/her ultimate goal. Toman (1992), Swanson (1992a),

and Jepsen (1992) provided an in-depth examination of one case of an artistic client. Neither of these studies attempted to generalize to other populations. Instead, the reader is given some information and left to determine the generalizability of these accounts for him/herself.

Krammer's (1985) study of a rural high school population revealed that young men expressed greater confidence in their ability to achieve their career goals than did young women. Bloch (1989) found that students at risk of dropping out of school received motivational and goal-setting help through the use of the career information system (a computerized program for career exploration).

Dunn and Veltman (1989) report positive differences in career maturity following their summer program for 22 minority youth. Similarly, Prices and Stipes (1987) describe a conference for disadvantaged clients of a Mountain Community Action Program. The program was found to develop career decision-making and planning skills, job-seeking skills, job-retention skills, and the self-esteem and confidence of participants.

Naubauer (1986) describes the bounded system of Philadelphia's four semi-autonomous high school academies designed to provide disadvantaged students with an academic and vocational program. The goal was to enhance marketable job skills. Class (1990) also presents a community response to the problem of high school dropouts. "Program goals included providing youngsters with career education, supportive services, and incentives to stay in school" (Class,

1990, p. 5). The study provided a complete record of the participating youths and the intervention to which each member responded best.

Case studies, as a methodology, are very well represented throughout the career and youth literature. As can be seen from the above, there is a large diversity of topics that relied on the use of this methodological perspective. The researchers did an excellent job of defining their bounded systems.

Surveys

Studies were classified as surveys if their purposes were to describe characteristics of a large group of people, programs, or institutions. Survey research had to demonstrate interest in the present conditions of something. It did not attempt to manipulate or change present circumstances. The samples attempted to be representative of the populations the authors wished to generalize.

Baldridge and Bailey (1992) mailed surveys to all state vocational education directors to assess the national level of prevocational education available in the United States. They found that 29 states had state-administered prevocational education courses or programs. Five states required all students to take such courses, and prevocational education was organized and conducted as a separate course in 72% of the states. Most states had at least 50% of all students enrolled in prevocational education.

Penick and Jepsen (1992) found that ". . . family functioning dimensions as evaluated by 11th grade students and their parents were more frequent and stronger predictors of career development than gender, socioeconomic status, and

educational achievement" (p. 208). For example, adolescents from enmeshed families were found to have difficulty mastering career development tasks because they were unable to distinguish their own goals from parental goals and expectations (Penick & Jepsen, 1992).

Banks (1988) surveyed 4,798 15- to 17-year-olds from four regions in the United Kingdom. Information was gathered on ". . . educational achievement, career history, plans for the future, attitudes toward employment and self-concept" (Banks, 1988, p. 365). Regional differences were found in career preparation and there was an expressed commitment to employment in all areas. Girls and the younger participants viewed youth training more favourably (Banks, 1988).

Hamilton and Powers (1990) surveyed working-class females on their transition from school to work. They found that ". . . recent graduates enter a distinctive labor market that renders vocational planning and previous work experience irrelevant" (Hamilton & Powers, 1990, p. 241).

Farmer (1983) surveyed high school students on their career and homemaking plans. She found that high school females aspire to higher-level careers as compared to males and that boys expect to share parenting and career role responsibilities equally with spouses.

Fails (1989) reports that the educational level of mothers was significantly correlated with the seniors' plans to attend college. "The educational level of fathers, on the other hand, was not significantly related to the educational and career aspirations of their children" (Fails, 1989, p. 1).

Surveys conducted in the youth and career field show a fairly large degree of topical diversity. There appears to be no shortage of survey research. Sample sizes ranged from 49 to 5,937 and response rates ranged from 36% to 98%. Sampling procedures appeared to demonstrate good generalizability to intended populations.

Comparative Experimental

Studies were classified as comparative experimental if they were utilized to test a hypothesis based on a well-defined population. An attempt had to be made to look for a relationship between some clearly stated independent and dependent variables. The independent variables needed to be under the control of the researchers with random assignment of participants.

Prediger and Brandt (1991) ". . . sought to determine whether interest and ability measures can help high school students identify vocational education programs in which they may experience satisfaction and success" (p. 132). The results indicated that computer-based interventions may effectively link interest and ability scores to vocational-technical program options (Prediger & Brandt, 1991).

An interesting study conducted by Olson and Matkin (1992) used stratified and cluster sampling methods to examine whether differences exist between student and counsellor perceptions of counsellor work activities.

> Statistically significant results indicated that students did not believe that counselors were actually performing the majority of tasks commonly and ideally associated with career counseling services. Although students and

> counselors agreed on ideal career counselor work activities, counselor responses revealed no difference between their actual and ideal duties. (Olson & Matkin, 1992, p. 324).

Miller, Newell, Springer, and Wells (1992) sampled from three different colleges to test the reliability of the College Majors Finder Test. The results supported the use of this assessment device.

Munson (1992) randomly selected 251 participants with a mean age of 16.7 to investigate the relationships among self-esteem level, vocational identity, and career salience in high school students. The study used Super's life span career development theory. "High self-esteem students scored significantly higher than low self-esteem students on vocational identity and career salience (participation, commitment, and values expectations) in school and home or family roles, but they did not differ on work, community, or leisure roles" (Munson, 1992, p. 361).

Muñoz-Sastre (1992) conducted a study in Spain to predict the occupational preferences of 14-year-olds after a career education program. Only 19% of the variance was explained and Muñoz-Sastre concluded that it is ". . . worth stressing that prediction of occupational preferences for 14-year-olds is very imprecise" (p. 315).

Research using comparative experimental methods appears to be abundant in the youth and career field. Random sampling appears quite viable in this field. This may be due to the relatively nonintrusive topics that are being studied. Hypotheses, independent and dependent variables are clearly stated in all of the

cases found. The samples were based on well-defined populations and there was a good attempt to test for the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Quasi Experimental

Studies were classified as quasi experimental if they were conducted to test an hypothesis based on a well-defined population. An attempt had to be made to look for a relationship between some clearly stated independent and dependent variables. There did not need to be random assignment of participants.

Fouad and Keeley (1992) hypothesized that there would be a meaningful relationship between an attitudinal measure of career maturity and a measure of career maturity reflecting job performance-related behavioral competencies. However, the results indicated only modest relationships between the career maturity attitudes and the behavioral measures (Fouad & Keeley, 1992).

Hoffman, Hofacker, and Goldsmith (1992) studied the relationship between students' career choices and the parental influences on those choices. Their results indicated that both female and male students are influenced more by their fathers than their mothers. An implication raised by this study is that, in some situations, ". . . the amount of closeness students feel towards their fathers could lead the student to major in something that he or she does not have much aptitude or interest" (Hoffman, Hofacker, & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 72).

Swanson (1992b) used the Strong Interest Inventory to assess the applicability of Holland's model to African-American students. The results

indicated support for the use of Holland's model; however, Swanson (1992b) states that more research is needed because ". . . we simply do not know enough about whether constructs of career behavior developed in Caucasian samples generalize to nonCaucasian people" (p. 155).

Prior to the conflicting evidence on the concept of career maturity, McNulty and Borgen (1988) theorized that making realistic career choices was an important factor in achieving job success. They hypothesized and found evidence to support the relationship between self-concept and vocational maturity as compared to ideal versus realistic job choices (McNulty & Borgen, 1988). In other words, those with high levels of vocational maturity and self-concept ratings were more realistic in their job choices.

Conflicting evidence was also found in 1989 by Niles and Herr. In their longitudinal study, Niles and Herr (1989) found that ". . . 12th-grade achievement, career related knowledge, and school and employment activities were minimally predictive of age 24-27 exploration and establishment stage career maturity . . ." (p. 110). Overall, there was no predictive value gleaned from the career maturity measures.

Quasi experimental methods are frequently used in the career and youth field. There was strong agreement between the stated hypotheses and the clearly defined search for relationships between independent and dependent variables. This type of methodology appears to be one of the most common approaches used in this field.

Conclusion

This quasi meta-analysis revealed many trends within the career and youth field. For example, Canadians appear to be rather underrepresented in the quantity of studies conducted. The eastern United States appears to dominate this field. There was fairly good representation from countries outside of North America. A large diversity of people conducting research in this field was found. Similarly, a wide range of journals appear to be publishing research in this area.

In terms of methodologies used, researchers appear to be very strong in their use of philosophical, case study, survey, comparative experimental, and quasi experimental methods. However, there appears to be an insufficient amount of research using historical and ethnographic methods. Thus, the writer made some recommendations to alleviate the deficits in these areas.

Overall, this quasi meta-analysis achieved its goals of sampling on the basis of methodological diversity. This analysis does not purport to be exhaustive. Instead, it should be perceived as a review of what is going on in the career and youth field from many different methodological perspectives.

There appears to be a need for authors in this field to do more qualitative research in general. More specifically, there is a need for more longitudinal studies to confirm or refute the constructs of career maturity and career stages. For example, research needs to be conducted on people's attitudes, values, and career knowledge at various points in their lives in order to compare these variables with actual career paths chosen by participants. This type of research

would likely help to alleviate the current disputes in the field about the constructs of career maturity and career stages. Inevitably, this research may lead to a new paradigm for career counselling.

Of prime importance is the need to start doing more studies on why people do not follow through on their career goals after going through a satisfactory career planning process. Also of utmost importance for the field is the necessity to start conducting more research on the sociological, historical, economic, and political determinants of career development. This means examining the system and not only the individual client. As already mentioned, this research may have a place in policy formation. This type of research has already led companies to modify their work arrangements. Examples include offering employees part-time work, work-at-home arrangements, and job sharing options.

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Table 1

Number of Studies Found in Each of the 18 Sources

Journal Name	No. of Studies
Career Development Quarterly	25
Journal of Vocational Behavior	10
Canadian Journal of Counselling	7
Journal of Career Development	5
Vocational Guidance Quarterly	1
Journal of Marriage and the Family	1
School Counselor	1
Cambridge Journal of Education	1
Behavior Change	1
Family Relations Journal of Applied Family and Child Studies	1
Youth and Society	1
Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development	1
Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education	1
Educational Horizons	1
Journal of Counseling Psychology	1
Total no. of journal sources	58
Sources outside of journals:	
Theses/dissertations	7
Textbooks, books, chapters	1
Unpublished papers	1
Total no. of sources outside of journals	9
Total no. of sources	67

Table 2

Methodological Classification

Methodology	No. of Studies	% of Total
Historical	5	7.5
Philosophical	12	18.2
Ethnographic	0	0.0
Case Study	11	16.7
Survey	12	18.2
Comparative Experimental	13	19.7
Quasi Experimental	13	19.7
Total	66	100.0

Note. The one textbook was not classified and therefore does not appear in the total number of studies.